United Nations E/2017/SR.38

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Humanitarian affairs segment

Summary record of the 38th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 23 June 2017, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Schulz (Vice-President) ..... (Germany)

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Closing of the segment

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Mr. Schulz (Germany), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/72/76-E/2017/58)

1. **The representative of the United States of America** said that his country continued to support the implementation of the Grand Bargain through the promotion of joint needs assessments and prioritized, comprehensive humanitarian appeals, more coherent programming between humanitarian and development assistance, improved field leadership and coordination, greater accountability and an enhanced role for local responders. The United States was strongly in favour of reduced management costs, multi-year planning and funding, reduced earmarking and the provision of cash assistance when appropriate.

2. The United States remained deeply concerned about the lack of protection for civilians in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan and Yemen, and called on all parties to allow full, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance. Moreover, it was important to help humanitarian actors to operate in an independent and impartial manner.

3. Access constraints were the main driver of famine in South Sudan and were causing food insecurity in Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria. The United States was one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance to those countries; additional support was needed from others in the international community.

4. Efforts were needed to elevate the issue of internal displacement within the United Nations and globally. After all, the overwhelming majority of displaced persons remained within their countries' borders. While the United States generally supported the adoption of the draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2017/L.24), it objected to the reference to technology transfer in paragraph 4 and opposed any language that undermined intellectual property rights. It should also be noted that, on 1 June 2017, the President of the United States had announced that the United States would withdraw from, or renegotiate its participation in, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

5. The value of the draft resolution would be diminished if its content stagnated or if it failed to address the most pressing issues on the ground. Indeed, the investment of the United States in future negotiations processes would depend on the extent to which the current and future resolutions would reflect such issues.

6. **The observer for Mexico** said that his country welcomed the Secretary-General's report on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/72/76-E/2017/58). Of the 26 recommendations made therein, 10 related to international humanitarian law, which parties to conflict persistently disregarded — an alarming trend. There was a need to respect international humanitarian law, facilitate dialogue, promote cooperation and adopt a human rights-based approach.

7. The World Humanitarian Summit had provided a forum for in-depth analysis of the humanitarian sector, and the Agenda for Humanity represented a crucial first step. Similarly, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants provided a historic opportunity to protect the security and dignity of persons crossing borders. In the Declaration, States had agreed to develop a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and a global compact on refugees. All relevant actors should commit to collective efforts in that regard. Mexico, along with a number of Central American countries, was applying a comprehensive framework to address forced displacement issues in the region.

8. For Mexico, prevention was a priority. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provided the international community with a powerful tool for avoiding human and material losses. At the fifth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which had taken place in May 2017 in Cancún, Mexico, participants had stressed the need to build resilience at all levels. The President of Mexico had chaired a

leaders' forum for disaster risk reduction, which had led to the adoption of a high-level communiqué containing a strategic commitment to ensuring the resilience of infrastructure and housing. In addition, he wished to recall that the Secretary-General had outlined his vision for a renewed focus on prevention in all its dimensions, including with regard to conflicts, human rights and financial matters.

9. **The representative of China** said that the international community should work together, forge consensus and adopt practical measures in response to the numerous, interconnected challenges that it faced. Respect for international law and the norms of international relations was a precondition for effective humanitarian assistance, which should be in line with the Charter of the United Nations and guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

10. Disputes should be settled by political means, with an emphasis on maintaining regional peace and stability. At the same time, the international community should prevent the politicization of humanitarian affairs, promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and establish a global governance system to steer the process of globalization. Developed countries, meanwhile, should meet their commitments with regard to official development assistance, and humanitarian resources should not be increased at the expense of the resources allocated to development. In particular, developed countries should increase the financial, technical and capacity-building support afforded to the least developed countries.

11. Climate change, food insecurity and other factors exacerbated the risk of, and vulnerability to, natural disasters. Accordingly, the international community should actively implement the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework, enhance the adaptive capacity of developing countries and widely disseminate advanced infrastructure, technology and expertise.

12. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should further involve developing countries in its work and give them a voice in international humanitarian affairs. Humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with the actual needs and priorities of recipient governments.

13. China was willing to deepen international cooperation in disaster risk reduction and management, and, in recent years, had provided dozens of countries with emergency humanitarian assistance. In 2017, China had provided Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and other countries with ¥ 330 million, in addition to food assistance of US$ 34 million. The China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund was in operation, with the first round of projects directed at assisting refugees and migrants, improving the safety of peacekeepers and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

14. **The observer for Jordan** said that the meeting was taking place in the context of a deteriorating humanitarian situation, exacerbated by a widening funding gap. All stakeholders in the international community should share the associated burden.

15. In the face of some of the most considerable humanitarian challenges since the end of the Second World War, it was important to find pioneering solutions to the huge disparity between humanitarian needs and the financial and other assistance provided. Cooperation between the humanitarian and development sectors should be strengthened, and support should be given to developing countries prior to crises.

16. The Government of Jordan called on the United Nations to step up its efforts in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, all of which were affected by so-called grade 3 crises. Jordan itself was boldly assuming its humanitarian and moral responsibilities with regard to the Syrian civil war. More than 1.4 million Syrian nationals were currently living in Jordan, accounting for over 20 per cent of the total population. However, the ramifications of the war for Jordan went beyond mere migration, affecting the Government's budget and the country's infrastructure and economic development.

17. The task of dealing with the emergencies affecting the countries that neighboured Jordan was one that should be shouldered by all. In that connection, the implementation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the outcomes of other

international humanitarian processes required an efficient strengthening of international cooperation.

18. The Government of Jordan had recently adopted a three-year response plan for the Syrian crisis and was rolling out a multisectoral resilience-building programme. Given the considerable cost of such initiatives, it hoped that the funding commitments made at the Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region would be honoured as soon as possible.

19. Respect for international humanitarian law was fundamental. Jordan strongly condemned attacks on schools and the military use of schools, which were flagrant violations of that law. It also called on the international community to protect persons employed in the humanitarian sector.

20. **The representative of South Africa** said that her country welcomed the Secretary-General's report, which would facilitate the sharing of best practices and experiences.

21. The key to an effective transition from relief to early recovery and development was enabling systematic and predictable planning and coordination support. It was important to move away from the current situation of inter-agency competition towards a model of collaborative efficiency.

22. It was worrying that, despite agreement on the Transformative Agenda, international humanitarian aid had not been made a priority for transformation. Greater accountability and swifter, more targeted humanitarian aid was needed. There should be a collective effort to give humanitarian issues the same consideration as the pillars of peace and security, development, and human rights.

23. Reports of famine and food insecurity in Somalia, eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen were of great concern, as was the funding gap for meeting needs on the ground. South Africa urged both traditional and non-traditional donors to respond positively to calls for humanitarian financial assistance, and supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to increase the annual funding of the Central Emergency Response Fund to US$ 1 billion by 2018.

24. The Government of South Africa had signed, ratified and incorporated into domestic law all the treaties relevant to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It called on other States to do the same and on parties to conflicts to comply with the two bodies of law.

25. **The representative of Colombia** said that humanitarian crises were not confined to a particular geographical area. Consequently, international cooperation and solidarity were critical to finding appropriate, sustainable solutions.

26. Since crises sparked by non-international armed conflict could last for decades, it was unrealistic to label them as emergencies. The international community was confronted with structural problems that required innovative approaches. In Colombia, it was significant that peace talks had taken place concurrently with the implementation of the Victims and Land Restitution Act. The implication was that the end of the Colombian conflict entailed not only the cessation of hostilities but also the full integration of victims into a reconciled society. For the peace process to be durable, Colombia needed the backing of the international community.

27. The nexus between humanitarian assistance and development created a responsibility to tackle the root causes of the Colombian conflict. There was a need to restore violated rights and provide guarantees of non-repetition. Humanitarian needs, like the conflicts that caused them, evolved over time. As a result, humanitarian actors and States had to adapt their approaches to changing realities.

28. Perhaps the most valuable lesson learned during the Colombian peace process was that victims could not continue to be viewed as passive stakeholders in conflicts. They were, above all, rights holders, and should play a decisive role in conflict resolution. Moreover, a desire to preserve their dignity should underpin all the work carried out by the international community.

29. **The observer for Montenegro** said that the world was witnessing the biggest humanitarian catastrophe since the end of the Second World War. Large parts of the populations of Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and the Chad Basin had been struck by famine, while nearly 20 per cent of the global population lived in extreme poverty.

30. Montenegro appreciated the Secretary-General's emphasis on the prevention of human suffering and was particularly supportive of the New Way of Working initiative, which had emerged as part of the Agenda for Humanity. States needed to work together to ensure that persons who had been left behind were able to return to the global community as partners in achieving sustainable development. Interaction among Member States, the private sector, civil society and those in need of relief was essential for progress, and the inclusion of affected persons was especially important.

31. Efforts by humanitarian NGOs to assist at-risk populations were admirable. The international community needed to explore practical ways to support local actors and contribute to local financial security, while upholding the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

32. As part of the process of accession to the European Union, Montenegro was putting in place a solid legislative framework for the provision of humanitarian and development assistance. The Government had established an intersectoral working group with a mandate to draft a law on developmental cooperation and humanitarian assistance, which was expected to be adopted by the end of 2017.

33. The appeal to leave no one behind applied also to traditionally underrepresented groups, including young people, ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities and women and girls. Political will and the expeditious provision of relief were essential for meeting the needs of such groups. Any necessary delay would threaten the livelihoods of populations in precarious circumstances and weaken efforts to attain sustainable development.

34. **The observer for Sri Lanka** said that his country had itself grappled with humanitarian crises, including a protracted conflict and, one month previously, a devastating flood that had claimed 300 lives. The Government was grateful for the humanitarian support that had been received from bilateral partners, the United Nations system and international donors. National security forces had been involved in rescue operations, supported by a strong ground-level administrative network.

35. Sri Lanka had set up mechanisms to fulfil its commitments under the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. However, there were challenges to mainstreaming disaster risk management in livelihood development and poverty reduction programmes, building resilience at the community level and developing disaster risk profiles to encourage policymakers to take risk-informed decisions.

36. The Government had established a national insurance scheme to pay compensation for houses damaged and destroyed by natural disasters, but more investment was needed for rebuilding in cases where there were serious capacity gaps. Moreover, the development of disaster risk management measures using modern science and technologies that guaranteed accurate early warnings had been identified as a priority.

37. In August 2016, the Cabinet of Sri Lanka had approved a national policy on durable solutions for conflict-affected displacement, which provided for institutional mechanisms to respond to the needs of internally displaced persons. The Government had undertaken a voluntary commitment to introduce a national human rights action plan for the period 2017-2021, which included a section on the rights of internally displaced persons and refugee returnees.

38. To ensure, by 2030, that no one was left behind, the international community needed to strengthen its humanitarian response, while respecting humanitarian principles; build capacities for disaster preparedness at the national level; manage risks; enhance resilience on the basis of scientific data and technology; take disaster risk into consideration when making investment decisions; fill funding gaps by making unearmarked contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund and humanitarian flash appeals; and coordinate

operations, including joint planning and programming efforts by development and humanitarian agencies, giving priority to the needs on the ground.

39. **The observer for Morocco** said that humanitarian crises had led to the mass displacement of populations, who were subsequently exposed to security threats, exploitation and human trafficking. A combination of armed conflicts, natural disasters and food crises had engendered circumstances that hindered the efforts of humanitarian actors to assist affected populations.

40. Recent international experience of handling natural disasters highlighted the need for efficient coordination among humanitarian actors and other stakeholders. Morocco condemned the obstruction of humanitarian work, including all forms of violence against aid workers. Access to vulnerable populations was indispensable, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance should be shaped by fact-based assessments of the needs of affected populations.

41. Humanitarian actors should not be influenced by political considerations; their work should be governed by the principles of impartiality and independence. The international humanitarian response system should continue to manage specific incidents without losing sight of vulnerabilities. An integrated approach aimed at placing local actors at the heart of humanitarian work could help to bolster the operational capacity of humanitarian agencies and organizations.

42. Member States should supply predictable funding for humanitarian work in order to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations and contribute to a stronger, more effective international humanitarian system.

43. **The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that humanitarian assistance should be provided in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and with the guiding principles set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182. Specifically, the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the States should be observed and States receiving humanitarian assistance should have the primary role in its coordination. Her country welcomed the Secretary-General's report and the draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. At the national level, the framework for humanitarian action was outlined in the Constitution and in the National Plan for 2013-2019. On the basis of the latter instrument, the Government offered support through the Simón Bolívar Humanitarian Assistance Task Force.

44. Strengthening disaster preparedness was fundamental to ensuring the transition from the relief phase to the recovery and development phases. Preparations should include anticipating the coordination needs of actors with different capacities, enhancing accountability and supplying information at an early stage to facilitate timely recovery.

45. There was a need to examine the root causes of humanitarian crises, particularly those resulting from colonial or neo-colonial practices. The community of nations should put an end to the illegal occupation of territory, the excessive use of force against civilians and forced displacement. To reduce the risk of humanitarian emergencies caused by natural disasters, States should promote and strengthen the implementation of the Paris Agreement. It was also important to continue to expand national and local humanitarian capacities. The need for capacity-building could not, however, be used to justify a failure to observe the universal principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States.

46. **The representative of Italy** said that Italy was strengthening the interlinkages between development and humanitarian tools, thus increasing its capacity to tackle the root causes of crises and to link relief and rehabilitation to development.

47. Italy fully endorsed the New Way of Working initiative and was convinced that the vast majority of modern-day crises were man-made and conflict-driven, and that extremist violence and instability were concurrent drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition. However, food insecurity itself could fuel violence and prolong conflicts. Building long-term resilience was fundamental, and the decisions made at the recent Group of Seven summit in Taormina would contribute to such resilience.

48. Italy upheld international humanitarian law, including the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, not only by States but also by non-State actors. Humanitarian access was still one of the most delicate topics on the international agenda. The protection of civilians must remain at the heart of the international community's policymaking guidelines. Italy was committed to preventing, and ensuring accountability for, any attacks directed at humanitarian and health-care structures and personnel, and to preventing the military use of schools, in accordance with the Safe Schools Declaration.

49. Along with its European Union partners, Italy was engaged in the protection of vulnerable groups in emergencies, and had devised mandatory ad hoc guidelines to better include persons with disabilities in humanitarian financing work. In 2017, Italy had increased its humanitarian budget by 10 per cent to nearly €115 million; a further 10 per cent increase was expected in 2018. Italy had also doubled its contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund.

50. Italy would uphold its commitment to the search and rescue operation that had so far saved hundreds of thousands of lives in the Mediterranean, but migration was a global challenge that required a long-term, coordinated approach. It was clear that humanitarian action could not substitute for political solutions. Courageous leadership, early responses, investment in stability and the broad participation of civil society all played a key role in preventing and resolving conflicts and humanitarian crises.

51. **The observer for Indonesia** said that collective efforts were instrumental in meeting humanitarian needs and reducing risks and vulnerabilities. While humanitarian action was important, the best way to protect human rights was prevention. It was therefore imperative to strengthen existing preventive mechanisms, including by ensuring respect for international norms.

52. In its efforts to find comprehensive, durable solutions to the global humanitarian crisis, the international community should ensure that the various post-2015 processes contributed to building community resilience and reducing vulnerabilities; that the preparatory processes for global compacts on migrants and refugees and their outcomes generated high-level commitment and action; and that expertise from the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the high-level political forum on sustainable development was used to promote coherence and synergies among all post-2015 processes and outcomes.

53. Building resilience at the community level was one of the priorities of his country's National Medium-term Development Plan for 2015-2019. On a related note, Indonesia had developed a national road map for 2015-2030 to help it to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The road map focused on people-centred development that was comprehensive, equitable and sustainable, and laid out a strategy for ensuring that vulnerable members of the community, especially the poor and persons with disabilities, were not left behind.

54. **The representative of Iraq** said that confronting and preventing increasingly complex humanitarian challenges required the international community to share experiences and best practices. There was a need to improve partnerships in the field of humanitarian development and international finance institutions, and to uncover the reasons for forced displacement. The global compacts that States had agreed to develop under the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants would provide an opportunity to tackle the issue of displacement and enhance the protection given to displaced persons. In that connection, national and local authorities should be encouraged to include displaced persons in their development plans.

55. Increased humanitarian needs in 2016 had widened the humanitarian funding gap in Iraq and reduced the country's ability to respond effectively. Cooperation was necessary to construct societies and institutions that were able to adapt to crises and generate conditions conducive to development, gender equality and universal education.

56. Solutions had to be found for the financial crises that were currently affecting most countries in the world, so as to ensure that requests for humanitarian assistance were not ignored. In addition, humanitarian workers and medical personnel in conflict zones should be protected.

57. Iraq was locked in a struggle to eliminate the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from its territory. Despite the barbarity of its enemy, the Government had not failed in its duty of care to civilians, and Iraqi forces had respected international humanitarian law and human rights standards. One of the Government's priorities was to evacuate civilians from conflict areas and provide them with appropriate shelter until those areas had been liberated and cleared of mines. Civilians who returned to their homes were provided with basic services by the relevant government ministries.

58. Iraq called on the international community to assist reconstruction efforts in the country and on the United Nations and other international organizations to build the capacity of States to handle crises and thereby prevent and alleviate human suffering.

59. **The representative of the Russian Federation** said that international relations were unstable, the potential for conflict was huge, mechanisms for overcoming crises had stalled and food insecurity was a growing problem. The world was experiencing an unprecedented increase in the number, scale and duration of humanitarian crises, leading to slower economic development and mass migration. The financial resources available to respond to humanitarian needs were becoming insufficient. Against that backdrop, it was necessary to reform the international humanitarian response system, with a focus on enhancing the effectiveness of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and humanitarian coordinators. Ongoing reforms were insufficiently transparent; during the Council's humanitarian affairs segment, there should be an open dialogue on all the humanitarian activities carried out by the United Nations.

60. The Russian Federation believed in the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and respect for sovereignty, without which humanitarian assistance was liable to be subjected to military and political agendas. A model based on a smooth transition from recovery to development was preferable to nexus approaches, as it better reflected the reality on the ground and provided a clear framework for dovetailing humanitarian assistance with measures to promote long-term development.

61. To enhance food security, there was a need for sustainable agricultural production, a sound use of natural resources and the introduction of innovative practices at all stages of the food chain. The Russian Federation was a major food producer and exporter, and regularly provided humanitarian food assistance through bilateral channels. Together with specialized United Nations agencies, it was carrying out development projects aimed at providing food in schools and fostering sustainable agriculture.

62. Between 2014 and 2016, the Russian Federation had donated US$ 240 million to overcome the consequences of humanitarian crises, including those caused by conflicts. The Russian Federation had considerable experience of disaster risk reduction and was in favour of sharing best practices in that regard. It valued the draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2017/L.24), which contained a number of important new guidelines for improving humanitarian responses.

63. It was regrettable that one of the speakers at a previous meeting had made politicized and completely unfounded allegations against the Russian Federation. The crisis in south-eastern Ukraine had been caused by the antiterrorist operations conducted by the Kyiv authorities against their own people and the Donbass trade blockade, which constituted a violation of human rights. The attention of the international community should be drawn to the issue and an appropriate declaration should be drafted in response.

64. **The representative of Brazil** said that the topic chosen for the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council's 2017 session was a stark reminder of the international community's collective failure, but also its potential ability to increase solidarity and promote positive changes in human lives. "Leaving no one behind" was a call for concerted action in response to the mass displacement of persons. A humane, sensitive, compassionate and people-centred approach was required.

65. Brazil took note of the Secretary-General's report and wished to emphasize the importance of addressing the operational aspects of humanitarian assistance as a means of preventing politicization and boosting coordination. Brazil shared the concern expressed in

the report about the protection of humanitarian workers and medical personnel in conflict zones. It agreed that counter-terrorism frameworks must be adapted to mitigate any potentially negative humanitarian impact. Any measures taken should be in line with international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law.

66. Brazil further agreed that host communities of displaced persons required more support. At the same time, there should be a focus on broadening admission channels for refugees and people fleeing humanitarian crises, to ensure that they were not left behind. Brazil fully supported the adoption of a new approach that incorporated long-term sustainable development concerns in humanitarian operations. However, development and humanitarian affairs should not be conflated, especially from the institutional and operational points of view, as addressing humanitarian crises was a multidimensional challenge that might require initiatives that did not fall under the development pillar. The best way to bridge the humanitarian-development divide was to promote better coordination both within the United Nations system law and on the ground.

67. **The representative of Uganda** said that many people were being driven from their homes by natural or man-made disasters. Solutions had to be found. In Uganda, there had been large influxes of refugees and migrants, many of them women and children, who required food, shelter, health care, education and other basic social services. Around 2,000 refugees entered Uganda on a daily basis, adding to the existing refugee population of 1.2 million. The Government's resources being limited, it called on the international community to do its part and provide much-needed assistance.

68. In response to the arrival of South Sudanese and other refugees in northern Uganda, the Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees had been organized in Kampala with the aim of mobilizing international support. The Summit provided a critical opportunity for donor countries to contribute to the Government's rapid response funds. Countries that were heavily involved in rendering humanitarian assistance required technical aid and capacity-building, including training for aid workers on the ground, in order to build their resilience and ability to deal with crisis situations.

69. **The representative of Viet Nam** said that, as one of the countries that was most vulnerable to climate change, Viet Nam was not immune to humanitarian crises. Climate change had increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather incidents, with serious repercussions on the environment, food security, water resources, health and livelihoods. In 2014, Viet Nam had promulgated a law on natural disaster prevention and control. It had furthermore put in place a number of mitigation and adaptation policies. At the international level, Viet Nam spared no effort in fulfilling its commitments and obligations related to natural disaster prevention and control.

70. The El Niño and La Niña weather patterns were projected to cause food insecurity for more than 60 million people worldwide, although that figure could exceed 100 million unless appropriate action was taken. The patterns had led to drought in some parts of Viet Nam and to flooding and saltwater intrusion in others. In addition to adopting national policies and programmes, the Government participated in joint search and rescue operations and fostered regional and international cooperation with regard to early warning systems and the sharing of information and good practices related to disaster prevention and reduction.

71. Years of struggle against man-made and natural disasters had shown the importance of strong national ownership and leadership, the engagement of all sectors of society and unwavering international commitment and support. Coordination and solidarity at all levels were of the utmost importance in mobilizing resources and ensuring that no region, country, community or individual was left behind.

72. **The observer for Cuba** said that international humanitarian assistance should be rendered in compliance with the guiding principles set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, at the request and with the consent of recipient States and in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

73. Hunger and poverty affected billions of people around the world owing to factors such as income inequality, the global food crisis, job insecurity, climate change, an unjust

international economic order and natural disasters, which, in recent years, had grown in frequency and had struck the poorest countries with unprecedented force. Cuba was exposed to negative natural and technological events, which had shaped the development of the country's civil defence system over the previous 55 years.

74. In the light of the priorities established in the Sendai Framework, Cuba had updated its institutional and regulatory frameworks for disaster risk reduction, particularly at the local level. Sea level rise projections were taken into account in national economic and social development planning, and climate change adaptation measures were viewed as part of disaster risk reduction efforts. Early warning systems were being fine-tuned, and disaster management authorities and protection measures were being strengthened.

75. Despite the constraints occasioned by the commercial, economic and financial embargo that was being imposed on it by the United States of America, Cuba would continue to make a priority of international cooperation and the exchange of experience and good practices related to the prevention and handling of natural disasters. The tenth International Congress on Disasters, which was to be held in Havana in July 2018, would serve as an ideal forum in that regard.

76. The Government of Cuba was prepared to continue supporting countries affected by natural disasters, as demonstrated by the work of the award-winning Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specializing in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics.

77. **The representative of Algeria** said that the humanitarian challenges currently faced by the world stemmed from both man-made crises and natural disasters linked, increasingly, to climatic variations. Humanitarian actors, operating in a fragile environment, had to work effectively and avoid the politicization of the aid that they provided. Respect for humanitarian principles was the best way to preserve the long-term credibility of such actors, while the guiding principles set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 were as pertinent as ever.

78. Algeria was concerned about the infringement, in crisis zones, of international law in general, and international humanitarian law in particular. The collective efforts of States, humanitarian agencies and other stakeholders should be geared towards preventing crises and identifying their underlying causes. In the past, some cyclical natural disasters could have been averted if commitments with regard to official development assistance had been honoured.

79. Humanitarian vulnerabilities, underdevelopment and natural disasters often co-occurred with conflicts and insecurity. Consequently, it was important to promote peace and security in initiatives aimed at reducing those vulnerabilities. Algeria had made individual and collective commitments to find political solutions to conflicts that had given rise to humanitarian crises.

80. In Africa, the fragility of the humanitarian situation was increasingly clear, a situation exacerbated by funding gaps that rendered responses inadequate. The spread of famine and the return of diseases that had been considered eradicated should serve as a wake-up call to the international community as a whole. Urgent, targeted responses were required, including the provision of unearmarked contributions to humanitarian agencies to enable them to launch programmes in emergencies and in prolonged crises.

81. **The representative of Pakistan** said that the draft resolution contained in document E/2017/L.24 comprehensively addressed issues related to humanitarian assistance and reinforced the framework and principles for an effective and coordinated response to contemporary challenges, as set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182. Humanitarian emergencies were increasingly complex and called for greater international cooperation and coordination. With 141 million people in need of assistance, the yawning humanitarian funding gap was of great concern. To provide effective relief, an urgent scaling up of multi-year, unearmarked funding and an early fulfilment of pledges were needed. In that connection, Pakistan welcomed the recommendation to double the Central Emergency Response Fund annual funding target by 2018.

82. Pakistan was prone to large-scale natural disasters and the ravages of climate change. In response, appropriate institutional, infrastructural and legislative frameworks had been established. The national disaster management authority was at the forefront of disaster relief, recovery and rehabilitation, and it shared its experiences with others. The Government was fulfilling its World Humanitarian Summit commitments in the area of disaster preparedness, reducing vulnerabilities and risk, and building the resilience of affected communities.

83. Pakistan had hosted millions of Afghans for decades and continued to provide them with protection and assistance. The situation had placed a tremendous strain on the socioeconomic fabric, environment and political and security landscapes of the country. Pakistan expected any future global compact on refugees to provide a robust mechanism for equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing, and to help to counter xenophobia and discrimination.

84. In the absence of political will to end violence and reinforce protection, humanitarian solutions alone were insufficient. Pakistan was encouraged by efforts to integrate relief and recovery with development. Existing frameworks and agreements constituted a solid basis for collective action to ensure that the fruits of peace and prosperity were reaped by everyone, everywhere. However, the looming threat of famine in many parts of the world was a reminder that the international community could not afford to lose the momentum that it had generated in recent years.

85. **The observer for Thailand** said that the international community needed to accelerate its efforts to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and place people at the heart of its humanitarian action. People in vulnerable situations should not be perceived as victims. Instead, they should be equipped with knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute to humanitarian work. In order to mobilize adequate resources in times of emergency, it was necessary to improve the availability of data on risks and on the immediate needs of affected populations. Community resilience, self-sufficiency and preparedness should be enhanced on the basis of existing capacities. Successful home-grown approaches, including local solutions, should be shared and, when appropriate, adjusted and applied to alleviate human suffering. There was also a need for improved coordination among United Nations agencies and relevant regional and international organizations, including in synchronizing multidisciplinary support for Member States.

86. Like most countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Thailand was prone to natural disasters. The 2017 Constitution stated that all Thai citizens had a duty to cooperate in disaster prevention and mitigation. Moreover, the Government had developed a national disaster prevention and mitigation plan and had incorporated disaster risk reduction and management in several specific plans for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Work on a climate change adaptation plan was under way.

87. In early 2017, southern Thailand had been hit by some of the most severe flooding in decades. A national emergency operations centre had been set up to help to assess the situation and deliver relief. Ultimately, the Government's focus on ensuring social protection and on enhancing awareness and preparedness at the community level had enabled it to handle the situation.

88. Building partnerships was imperative. With that in mind, the Government had organized a post-disaster needs assessment workshop in Bangkok, was training its search and rescue teams to meet relevant international standards by 2021 and would host the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group Asia-Pacific Regional Exercise in 2019.

89. Thailand had played a leading role in preparing the Post-2015 Health Development Agenda of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in establishing the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine in Bangkok. Its humanitarian work was guided by the principles of moderation, reasonableness and risk management. It had introduced early warning systems and disseminated information on disaster response and risk reduction in many communities nationwide.

90. **The representative of the World Food Programme (WFP)**, speaking also on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said that

food and agriculture were key to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the 2017 Global Report on Food Crises, 108 million people in 48 countries were suffering from acute food insecurity, compared to 80 million in 2016. Disasters, land and environmental degradation, climate change and protracted crises were exacerbating the situation, while child undernourishment, stunting and mortality were also of concern.

91. There needed to be a fundamental transformation in how the international community tackled the causes and consequences of hunger. To achieve food security for those furthest behind, three significant blind spots had to be addressed, by investing in and supporting smallholders, who managed over 90 per cent of the world's farms; scaling up social protection systems in low-income countries; and ending women's disempowerment, which represented a fundamental barrier to the achievement of zero hunger.

92. WFP and FAO were contributing to global efforts to provide decision-makers and the public with transparent, harmonized information. Since 2016, through the Global Report on Food Crises, they had been working collectively to coordinate the compilation of food security and nutrition analyses and thereby inform resource allocation for humanitarian and resilience responses. The Global Network on Food Crises, which was being established, would enhance cooperation and act as a catalyst for shared analyses of needs and of the impacts of current and future crises.

93. Conflict was a major driver of food insecurity, which had deteriorated to unprecedented levels, pushing populations to the brink of starvation. When WFP, FAO and their partners had sufficient funding and access, lives and livelihoods were saved, famine was prevented and resilience was strengthened by linking humanitarian assistance to sustainable development.

94. WFP and FAO appealed to States to provide flexible, multi-year funding to help to lift people out of the vicious circle of food and nutrition insecurity and poverty.

95. **The representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** said that the international community needed to be smarter about how it prepared for, and responded to, emergencies in order to prevent suffering. It was unacceptable that 20 million people were on the brink of starvation in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen even though the signs of calamity had long been apparent. Less than a third of the humanitarian funding needs for those countries were covered, and cholera and measles were wreaking havoc.

96. Humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law were more relevant than ever and should remain at the centre of approaches to crises. However, it was also time for the international community to move beyond business as usual. Progress was slow, but there were glimmers of hope. The Every Woman, Every Child initiative, to which IFRC was proud to contribute, was shining a much-needed light on resource gaps that were affecting the provision of essential health services to children under 5 years of age and women in situations of violence and protracted crises.

97. Another cause for optimism was the gradual operationalization of the many international commitments to invest in community resilience, including through the provision of cash transfers and training in community-based health care and, particularly, responses to communities' own assessments of how they could make themselves stronger. In that connection, IFRC welcomed the recognition, in draft resolution E/2017/L.24, of risk management tools and the further development of innovative approaches such as forecast-based financing.

98. There were indications that local responders were being taken more seriously. Through the Grand Bargain, the issue of localization had been elevated to the top of the humanitarian financing agenda, and both donors and agencies were starting to consider far-reaching changes to the way they interacted with local actors. At the same time, governments were increasingly adopting the new laws, rules and procedures that they needed to oversee and facilitate the provision of international disaster assistance in their territories.

99. **The representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** said that draft resolution E/2017/L.24 highlighted States' appreciation of the differing needs of different people, the broad scope of activities that constituted effective humanitarian action and States' commitment to international law and humanitarian principles.

100. States were rightly placing fresh emphasis on inclusion, connectivity and obligation in humanitarian work. Inclusion was essential to meeting the particular needs of all people affected by armed conflict. ICRC wished to see an appreciation of intersectionality emerge in humanitarian practice and welcomed clear commitments to promote the participation of national and local authorities, persons with disabilities and, in programming decisions, people affected by armed conflict. It also appreciated States' determination to support education services. Inclusion meant access, both by people in need to appropriate services, and to those people by humanitarian workers.

101. A connection between relief and development resources was vital, and ongoing food emergencies and cholera epidemics illustrated the need to support basic services in times of crisis. If services were left behind in armed conflicts then people would be, too.

102. Humanitarian action required resilient development infrastructure in urban and rural areas alike. International humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law set proper standards for inclusion, access and the provision of relief, while humanitarian principles enabled a fair assessment of needs and an unbiased humanitarian response.

103. **The representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)** said that humanity, dignity and safety were fundamental principles of good migration, but were easily eroded when movement occurred out of necessity rather than choice. Migrants and displaced persons were among the most vulnerable in crisis contexts and were too often left out of the planning and development initiatives needed to reduce their exposure to risk and empower them as agents of their own solutions. The likelihood of disaster-related displacement was 60 per cent greater than it had been just four decades previously. Addressing displacement was indispensable for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

104. Draft resolution E/2017/L.24 comprehensively covered several of the most pressing humanitarian challenges of modern times, provided practical opportunities for enhanced humanitarian development, coherence and coordination, and rightly recognized that progress required predictable, flexible and multi-year funding. IOM supported calls to double the Central Emergency Response Fund annual funding target by 2018 and to broaden and diversify the Fund's income base.

105. Migrants were often among the worst affected by crises and had specific, heightened vulnerabilities owing to their status. IOM encouraged States to scale up migrant-inclusive crisis preparedness efforts, integrate migrants in all relevant planning and recovery actions, invest in resilience-building, uphold migrants' human rights and apply humanitarian principles in the protection of migrants.

106. In responding to migrants' needs and countering the risks and vulnerabilities that they faced, contextual analysis was key. Mobility helped to save lives and could play a part in fostering self-reliance and in the progressive resolution of displacement situations. Humanitarian work should be needs-driven, people-centred and inclusive of all affected individuals, including migrants.

107. IOM remained committed to those left most vulnerable in times of crisis and dedicated to improving coordinated responses and working towards collective outcomes.

108. **The observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta** said that the vocation of the Sovereign Order of Malta had always been to care for society's vulnerable. In that spirit, it had participated in the 2016 General Assembly high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, at which its representative had emphasized the need to implement development programmes that covered extended time periods and were complemented by emergency aid.

109. At the World Humanitarian Summit, the Order had joined governments and humanitarian stakeholders in recognizing the role of faith-based organizations in reducing human suffering through material and spiritual assistance.

110. The Order welcomed the Secretary-General's 2017 report and supported his recommendation to reinforce humanitarian principles, which, along with international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights, must be respected.

111. The growing number of attacks in conflict areas against civilians, humanitarian workers, medical personnel and facilities, schools and places of worship was of deep concern. Such attacks had an immediate impact on the Order's activities and deprived local populations of basic services, leading to poverty and forced displacement. Urgent measures were therefore required to address the situation.

112. The Order was committed to contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by taking steps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals that were directly related to its activities. It worked with affected populations to implement reconstruction and disaster preparedness programmes and assisted refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons in countries of origin, transit and arrival. It stayed after crises had passed with the objective of reducing poverty and vulnerability in the interests of long-term development.

113. It was important for all parties to ensure humanitarian access to populations in crisis areas and the full cooperation of national and local authorities. The Order was continuing its work in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, and would uphold its annual contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund. It encouraged the provision of multi-year, flexible funding, a reduction in bureaucracy and the direct funding of local actors. However, the increasing pressure on humanitarian assistance would subside only once political solutions had been found to the many conflicts that plagued the world.

114. **The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** said that UNICEF welcomed opportunities to promote new ways of working as a means to fulfil its Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was fully committed to building a more effective, accountable and robust operational system that put children's rights and needs at the heart of humanitarian and development action.

115. There was persistent disregard for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. High-intensity conflicts were characterized by a large number of child casualties, a high prevalence of association of children with armed forces, the detention of children for alleged security reasons and targeted or indiscriminate attacks in civilian areas that resulted in the destruction of life-saving and life-sustaining infrastructure and services. The international community had a collective obligation not to allow the situation to become the new norm, and all parties to conflicts should facilitate unconditional, unimpeded and sustained access to people in desperate need. Furthermore, UNICEF was concerned that donors' conditions related to counter-terrorism regulations might have a negative impact on humanitarian action and localization efforts.

116. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants underscored the acute risks faced by refugee and migrant children and, crucially, included a commitment to ensure that such children could return to school in destination countries and outlined measures to keep families together and counter xenophobia.

117. Given the highly dynamic nature of the current humanitarian situation, the need for predictable, flexible and unearmarked funds was critical. More multi-year funding that broke down the humanitarian-development divide would promote efficiency in meeting short-term needs, with long-term outcomes. Research into returns on investments demonstrated the high value, including in terms of results for children, of investing in preparedness. When UNICEF teams on the ground seized early opportunities to repair water-pumping stations, they delivered safe water to more people, in a more equitable manner and at a lower cost over time. However, such actions required upfront financing in high-risk environments.

118. In 2016, the top five resource partners of UNICEF had provided a little over 50 per cent of total emergency contributions. While that was generous and appreciated, UNICEF welcomed broadened partnerships and donor bases to increase the diversity, predictability and effectiveness of funding.

119. **The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** said that, according to the most recent Global Trends Report, 65.6 million people, including a record 22.5 million refugees, had been forcibly displaced in 2016. More than half of the world's displaced were children. The situation was unacceptable and spoke louder than ever to the need for solidarity and a common purpose in preventing and resolving crises. The most affected States, which were almost all low- and middle-income countries, were those that neighboured conflict zones.

120. The international refugee regime had not been designed to deal with long-standing dependent populations, and yet short-term humanitarianism was increasingly being relied upon to respond to long-term displacement. The secondary movement of refugees had put that approach under the spotlight, leading to a reaction that stigmatized refugees, but also to a renewed commitment to international solidarity and burden-sharing.

121. While it was important to be realistic about negative trends, there were grounds for optimism, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the new Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention and mediation, and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The pledge to leave no one behind should apply equally to refugees, and, if a country was serious about meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, it had to take into account all the people in its territory.

122. Partnerships remained central to the ability of UNHCR to deliver on its mandate. In implementing its strategic directions for 2017-2021, UNHCR would give priority to extending and strengthening partnerships in ways that made the most effective use of available resources and expertise. In that regard, it would remain fully engaged in humanitarian and development coordination mechanisms and would continue to contribute to discussions on rendering them more effective.

123. UNHCR was rolling out a multi-year planning initiative in 23 pilot countries. The initiative would seek to address root causes and to link humanitarian and development efforts, notably through alliances with non-traditional humanitarian actors. With regard to the eighteenth replenishment of the World Bank's International Development Association, the decisions to allocate US$ 14 billion to fragile conflict- and violence-affected States and to establish a US$ 2 billion sub-window for refugee-hosting countries were groundbreaking and could support comprehensive refugee responses.

124. **The representative of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)** said that civilians in conflict zones were exposed to the deadly threat posed by improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. For that reason, the international community had a moral duty to integrate mine action into humanitarian planning, programming and financing.

125. The aims of UNMAS included maximizing synergies, bridging divides among different sectors, strengthening partnerships and making humanitarian responses faster and more effective, needs-driven and people-centred. Like UNICEF, UNMAS had translated the commitments that it had made at the World Humanitarian Summit into concrete action, including with regard to localization and the empowerment of local women partners.

126. More than 5,000 UNMAS staff members were currently deployed on the front line in 18 countries and territories. Over the previous two years, the intensification of conflicts and the use of a wide range of weaponry had led to a dramatic rise in the number of civilians affected. Increasingly, the United Nations and its partners were operating in violent, complex and asymmetric environments, in which parties to conflicts blatantly disregarded international humanitarian law.

127. While the number of casualties caused by anti-personnel mines had decreased in recent times, the overall number of casualties caused by improvised explosive devices, anti-vehicle mines and other explosive remnants of war had grown. In Iraq, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, terrorist groups were planting mines and booby-trapping homes and

key infrastructure on an unprecedented scale. More victims of explosions were being left with lifelong disabilities and in need of both emergency and long-term care. There was therefore an urgent need to adhere to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

128. Large-scale mine risk education campaigns, risk education and mentoring for aid workers and contamination assessments were all crucial preventive measures. The elaboration of international mine action and improvised explosive devices safety and training standards and the building of national response capacities were also important.

129. Mine action should no longer be an afterthought. Rather, it should be at the core of protection and effective humanitarian planning and programming. Over the previous two decades, UNMAS had consistently adapted its programmes to the evolving needs of people affected by the legacy of war. For the international community, the time had come to be brave and to translate support into tangible action.

130. **The observer for the State of Palestine** said that the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territory was vital. The State of Palestine attached the utmost importance to humanitarian action in the territory, where the situation had deteriorated because of Israeli occupation and a lack of access for humanitarian aid organizations. International law was not being respected, but compliance with it was indispensable for the protection of vulnerable groups.

131. The pledge to leave no one behind should apply equally to those living in the occupied Palestinian territory. With that in mind, and in the fiftieth anniversary year of Israeli occupation, the State of Palestine renewed its call to the international community to increase the level of support provided.

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132. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

133. **The observer for the Holy See** said that, despite the cooperation of many delegations, the negotiations on the draft resolution had been particularly difficult. While there had been some progress in shaping specific paragraphs on famine and food insecurity, it was regrettable that the controversial Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health had been incorporated in the text.

134. The aforementioned Package was a set of priority activities that included 13 different reproductive health kits, some of which provided the equipment for abortion procedures such as vacuum aspiration. The Holy See wished to insist that health-care services should never operate to the detriment of the unborn, who had an equal right to life. While acknowledging the particular risks that women and children faced during humanitarian emergencies and their specific needs, including with regard to basic health care, the Holy See could not accept abortion as an appropriate solution. As a result, it disassociated itself from the paragraphs of the draft resolution that promoted the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health.

135. The Holy See did not consider abortion or access to abortion or abortifacients to be dimensions of the terms "sexual and reproductive health" and "sexual and reproductive health-care services". Moreover, it understood the term "gender" as being grounded in biological sexual identity and difference.

136. **The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to adopt draft resolution E/2017/L.24.

137. *It was so decided.*

138. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that, in a context of staggering and escalating humanitarian needs, the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council was an essential platform for States and other key stakeholders to discuss how to meet current and future challenges. Through the implementation of the Agenda for Humanity and the adoption of a

strong preventive approach, systematic changes were being introduced to ensure a more effective response to those challenges.

139. The segment had begun with a transition event linking the humanitarian and development sectors, during which concrete examples from Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic had illustrated how the New Way of Working could serve to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A major gap that had been identified was the need for pooled, flexible financing mechanisms to enable coherent planning and prioritization at the national level.

140. The High-Level Event on Famine Prevention and Response had highlighted the success that had so far been achieved in averting famine and the importance, in that regard, of the New Way of Working initiative. However, more funding and greater access were required. It was therefore imperative for donors to honour their financial pledges as soon as possible, and for the international community to address the underlying causes of famine and find political solutions.

141. It had been stressed, during the panel discussion on promoting respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, that non-compliance and a lack of access led to insufficient protection and assistance for people affected by armed conflict. The international legal framework had to be translated into action on the ground, with particular emphasis on training and awareness-raising. It was also crucial to create an environment for dialogue on international humanitarian law among States and with non-State actors, and for women to participate actively in the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law.

142. During the panel discussion on protracted crises, speakers had highlighted ongoing efforts in a number of countries to meet people's needs and systematically reduce risk and vulnerability. The adoption of the New Way of Working did not mean that the international community was casting aside its core responsibility to provide principled humanitarian assistance that saved lives and protected people in the most effective way. At the same time, there was a need to strengthen systems and normative frameworks that allowed people to care for themselves and build meaningful futures for their families and communities. Commitments to reduce risk and vulnerability must become the new normal, especially in protracted crises.

143. The panel discussion on disaster- and climate change-induced mobility had demonstrated that more actions were needed to build resilience and reduce the impact of disasters. Bringing together diverse expertise and resources, including from the private sector, was crucial, as were whole-of-community and whole-of-government approaches and the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement and the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda.

144. At the side events, emphasis had been placed on the crucial role of women's leadership in the humanitarian and development spheres, the changes needed to better address humanitarian crises in urban settings and practical ways of moving from the commitments made on localization through the Grand Bargain to a more efficient operational response.

145. During the general discussion, participants had considered ways to enhance responses to internal displacement and had noted the significant role of the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds in facilitating the provision of life-saving assistance to crisis-affected people. Donors were to be thanked for their strong and consistent support, but more was needed to achieve the necessary impact.

146. Together, everyone had laid a solid platform for delivering better humanitarian action to the most vulnerable people on the planet, which, for the international community, was both a desire and a duty.

147. **The President** said that, during the course of the humanitarian affairs segment, several themes had risen to prominence. He wished to touch upon five of them.

148. The first was the critical need for greater political and financial investment in prevention, including more risk-informed approaches to disaster management, conflict

prevention and mediation, and for continued investment in resilience-building and early warning and action.

149. The second was the need to address the staggering level of humanitarian need through new, innovative approaches and tools, and to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian system, including by fostering partnerships with, inter alia, the private sector.

150. The third was the importance of including local actors and women and girls in humanitarian action and of empowering them to serve as leaders and decision-makers. The improved collection and use of age- and gender-disaggregated data was crucial to enhancing humanitarian responses, as was taking into account the specific needs of marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities.

151. The fourth was the urgent need for political actors to use their influence to convince parties to conflicts to respect international humanitarian law. It was also important to promote safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, greater accountability for violations and respect for humanitarian principles.

152. The fifth was that, while donors had been incredibly generous in responding to humanitarian appeals, large funding gaps remained. Of particular importance were multi-year partnerships and an increase in flexible, unearmarked funding, while new partnerships with international financial institutions such as the World Bank were also vital.

153. To conclude, it was crucial that the discussions that had taken place during the humanitarian affairs segment continued and were translated into concrete actions that helped to alleviate suffering and both meet and reduce humanitarian needs.

Closing of the segment

154. After an exchange of courtesies, **the President** closed the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2017 session of the Council.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.